

definition table means comprised of at least one relation type record defining a provided relation type, and iv) relation instance table means comprised of at least one relation instance record which defines a relation of said provided relation type between said desired entity instance record and a provided entity instance record, wherein said entity definition table means, said entity instance table means, said relation definition table means and said relation instance definition means are part of a relational database;

means, operatively coupled to said relation definition table means, using said provided relation type, for retrieving from said relation definition table means said relation type record defining said provided relation type;

means, operatively coupled to said relation definition table retrieving means and to said relation instance table means, using said relation type record, for retrieving from said relation instance table means a specific relation instance record containing said provided relation type and said provided entity instance record, wherein said desired entity instance record is specified in said specific relation instance record by a desired entity type and a desired entity record identifier;

means, operatively coupled to said relation instance retrieving means and said entity definition table means, using said desired entity type, for retrieving from said entity definition table means a desired entity type record defining said desired entity type; and

means, operatively coupled to said entity type record retrieving means and said entity instance table means, using said desired entity type and said desired record identifier, for retrieving from said entity instance table means said desired entity instance record;

wherein a desired entity instance table is specified by said desired entity type record; and further wherein said desired entity instance record is a record identified by said desired entity record identifier in said entity instance table means.

82. (Amended) A computer method for retrieving a desired entity from a relational database wherein said desired entity is related to a provided entity by a provided relation type, said method comprising:

retrieving from relation definition table means, which comprises at least one relation type record defining a relation type, of said relational database a specific relation type record wherein said specific relation type record defines said provided relation type;

retrieving from relation instance table means corresponding to said specific relation type record of said relational database, based on said specific relation type record and said provided entity, a specific relation instance record defining a relation of said provided relation type between, said provided entity and said desired entity wherein said relation instance record specifies said desired entity by a desired entity type and a desired record identifier;

retrieving from entity definition table means of said relational database, based on said desired entity type and said desired record identifier, a desired entity type record wherein said desired entity type record [defines] contains said desired entity type and specifies a desired entity instance table of said relational database, associated with said desired entity type; and

retrieving from said desired entity instance table specified by said desired entity type record said desired